THE

Moral and Religious Cabinet.

"To aid the cause of Virtue and Religion."

Vol. I. SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 1808. No. 4.

GENUINE CHRISTIANITY.

By the late Rev. John Wesley.

[Continued from page 36]

4. This being observed, it will readily appear to every serious person, who reads the New Testament with that care, which the importance of the subject demands, that every particular branch of the preceding character, is manifestly promised therein: Either explicitly, under the very form of a promise, or virtually, under that of a description or command.

5. Christianity tells me, in the third place, how I may attain the promise, namely, by faith.

But what is faith? Not an opinion, no more that it is a form of words: not any number of opinions put together, be they ever so true. A string of opinions is no more Christian faith, than a string of beads is Christian holiness.

It is not an assent to any opinion, or any number of opinions. A man may assent to three, or three and twenty creeds: he may assent to all the Old and New Testaments (at least as far as he understand them) and yet have no Christian faith at all.

6. The faith by which the promise is attained, is represented by Christianity, as a power wrought by the Almighty in an immortal spirit, inhabiting the house of clay, to see through that veil into the world of spirits, into things invisible and eternal: a power to discern those things, which with eyes of flesh and blood no man hath seen or can see: either by reason of their nature, which (though they surround us on every side) is not

perceivable by these gross senses: or by reason of their distance, as being yet afar off, in the bosom of eternity.

7. This is Christian faith in the general notion of it. In its more particular notion it is, a divine evidence or conviction wrought in my heart, that God is reconciled to *me* through his son: inseparably joined with a confidence in him, as a gracious, reconciled father, as for all things so especially for all those good things which are invisible and eternal.

To believe (in the Christian sense) is then, to walk in the light of eternity: and to have a clear sight of and confidence in the most high, reconciled to me, through the son of his love.

8. Now how highly desirable is such a faith, were it only on its own account? For how little does the wisest of men know, of any thing more than he can see with his eyes? What clouds and darkness cover the whole scene of things invisible and eternal? What does he know even of himself, as to his invisible part? What, of his future manner of existence? How melancholy an account does the prying, learned philosopher, (perhaps the wisest and best of all Heathens) the great, the venerable *Marcus Antoninus* give of these things? What was the result of all his serious researches? Of his high and deep contemplations? "Either dissipation (of the soul as well as the body, into the common, unthinking mass) or a re-absorption into the universal fire, the unintelligent source of all things: or, some unknown manner of conscious existence, after the body sinks to rise no more." One of these three he supposed must succeed death; but which he had no light to determine. Poor *Antoninus!* With all his wealth, his honour, his power! With all his wisdom and philosophy!

"What points of knowledge did he gain?
That life is sacred all—and vain!
Sacred how high? And vain how low?
He could not tell—But died to know."

9. He died to know! And so must you: unless you are now a partaker of Christian faith. O consider this. Nay, and consider, not only how little you know of the immensity of the things that are beyond sense and time, but how uncertainly do you know even that little? How faintly glimmering a light is that you have? Can you properly be said, to *know* any of these things? Is that knowledge any more than bare conjecture? And the reason is plain. You have no senses suited to invisible or eternal objects. What desiderata then, especially to the rational, the reflecting part of mankind are these? A more extensive knowledge of things invisible and eternal: a greater certainty in whatever knowledge of them we have: and, in order to both, faculties capable of discerning things invisible.

10. Is it not so? Let impartial reason speak. Does not every thinking man want a window, not so much in his neighbour's as in his own breast? He wants an opening there, of whatever kind, that might let in light from eternity. He is pained to be thus feeling after God, so darkly, so uncertainly: to know so little of God, and indeed so little of any beside material objects. He is concerned, that he must see even that little, not directly, but in the dim, sullied glass of sense: and consequently so imperfectly and obscurely, that it is all a mere enigma still.

11. Now these very desiderata faith supplies. It gives a more extensive knowledge of things invisible, shewing what eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither could it before enter into our heart to conceive. And all these it shews in the clearest light, with the fullest certainty and evidence. For it does not leave us to receive our notices of them, by mere reflection from the dull glass of sense: but resolves a thousand enigmas of the highest concern by giving faculties suited to things invisible. O who would not wish for such a faith, were it only on these accounts? How much more, if by this I may receive the promise, I may attain all that holines and happiness?

12. So Christianity tells me: and so I find it, may every real Christian say. I now am assured, that these things are so: I

experience them in my own breast. What Christianity (considered as a doctrine) promised, is accomplished in my soul. And Christianity, considered, as an inward principle is the completion of all those promises. It is holiness and happiness; the image of God imprest on a created spirit: a fountain of peace and love springing up into everlasting life.

Sect. III. 1. And this I conceive to be the strongest evidence of the truth of Christianity. I do not undervalue a traditional evidence. Let it have its place and its due honour. It is highly serviceable in its kind, and in its degree. And yet I cannot set it on a level with this.

It is generally supposed, that traditional evidence, is weakened by length of time; as it must necessarily pass through so many hands, in a continual succession of ages. But no length of time can possibly affect the strength of this internal evidence. It is equally strong, equally new, through the course of seventeen hundred years. It passes now, even as it has done from the beginning, directly from God into the believing soul. Do you suppose time will ever dry up this stream? O no. It shall never be cut off.

Labitur & labetur in amur volubilis ævum.

2. Traditional evidence is of an extremely complicated nature, necessarily including so many and so various considerations, that only men of a strong and clear understanding can be sensible of its full force. On the contrary, how plain and simple is this? And how level to the lowest capacity? Is not this the sum? "One thing I know: I was blind; but now I see." An argument so plain, that a peasant, a woman, a child may feel all its force.

3. The traditional evidence of Christianity stands as it were a great way off; and therefore although it speak loud and clear, yet makes a less lively impression. It gives us an account of

what was transacted long ago, in far distant times as well as places. Whereas the inward evidence is intimately present to all persons, at all times and in all places. It is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, if thou believest in the Lord Jesus Christ. *This* then *is the record,* this is the evidence, emphatically so called, *That God hath given unto us eternal life: and this life is in his Son.*

[To be continued.]

From Knox's Christian Philosophy.

The proper evidence of the Christian Religion is the Illumination of the Holy Ghost, shining into the hearts of those who do not close them against its entrance.

NONE, says St. Paul, can say *Jesus is the Lord,* but by the HOLY GHOST. (1 Cor. xii. 3.) If then St. Paul be allowed to have understood the Christian religion, it is certain, that mere *human testimony* will never convince the infidel, and produce that faith which constitutes the true Christian. Our theological libraries might be cleared of more than one half their volumes, if men seeking the EVIDENCE of *Christianity,* would be satisfied with the declaration of St. Paul, and of the great Author of our religion.

There is a faith very common in the world, which teaches to believe, as an historical fact, that a person of the name of Jesus, a very good man, did live on earth, and that he preached and taught, under the direction of God or divine providence, an excellent system of morality; such, as, if duly observed, would contribute to their happiness, and recommend them to divine favor But this kind of faith is not the right faith; it believes not enough, it is not given by the Holy Ghost; for he, in whom God dwelleth, confesseth that Jesus is the Son of God, and the SAVIOUR of the world; (1 John iv. 13, 14, 15.) but they who acknowledge Jesus only as a good man teaching morality, know him not as a

SAVIOUR. Socrates taught fine morality; and so did Seneca, Epictetus, and many more; but he had not and could not teach the knowledge which leadeth to Salvation.

"Illuminating grace," says Dr. Gloucester Ridley, "consists not in the assent we give to the HISTORY of the gospel, as a narration of matters of fact, sufficiently supported by *human evidence*; for this may be purely the effect of our study and learning. The collating of copies, the consulting of History, the comparing the assertions of friends and the concessions of enemies, may necessitate such a belief, a faith which the devils may have, and doubtless have it. This sort of faith is an *acquisition* of our own, and not a GIFT." But FAITH IS THE GIFT OF GOD.

"There may be a faith," continues Dr. Ridley, "which is not the work of the Spirit in our hearts, but entirely the effect of human means, our natural faculties assisted by languages, antiquities, manuscripts, criticism, and the like, without any *divine aid*, except the *bare letter of the revelation;* and as this faith may rise out of human abilities, so may it be attended with pride in our supposed accomplishments, *envy* of others superior skill, and bitter *strife* against those who mistake or oppose such truths; and is therefore no manifestation of that Spirit which resisteth the *proud*, and dispenses its graces only to the *humble*. THIS WISDOM DESCENDETH NOT FROM ABOVE. But *the true saving* faith, at the same time that it informs the understanding, influences the WILL AND AFFECTIONS; it enlightens the eyes of the heart, says the apostle: (Eph. i. 18.) it is *there*, in the HEART, that the Christian man believeth; and if *thou believest with thine* HEART, *thou shalt be saved;* (Rom. x. 9.) while infidelity proceedeth from an avereness of our affections,—*from an evil heart of unbelief.*" (Heb. ii. 12.)

Is it not therefore strange, that learned apologists, well acquainted with scripture, should, after reading these strong declarations, that the HEART must be impressed before faith can be

fixed in it, should studiously avoid every topic which addresses itself to the *affections*, and coldly apply themselves to the understanding, in a language and manner which might become a mathematical lecturer solving a problem of Euclid.

Infidelity is increasing, and will continue to increase, so long as divines decline the means of conversion and persuasion which the scriptures of the New Testament declare to be the only *effectual* means; so long as they have recourse to human learning ONLY, in which they will always find opponents very powerful. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, (Acts xvi. 14.) and then she attended to the things spoken of Paul. The Lord opens the HEARTS of all men at some period of their lives; but the vanity of the world, the cares of gain, the pride of life, *shut* them again, and rejected the Holy Ghost. It is the business of divines to dispose those who are thus unfortunate and unwise, to be ready to receive the divine guest, should he again knock at the door of their hearts; but in doing this, they must preach the true *gospel*, which is not a system of mere human morality or philosophy, but the doctrine of grace.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE EXPERIENCE AND DEATH OF *SARAH CLARKE.*

WRITTEN BY THOMAS ROGERSON.

SARAH CLARKE was born in the parish of Fulstow, near Great Grimsby, Lincolnshire. As her mother was truly pious and a member of the Methodist society, she had often an opportunity of hearing the gospel while young. But the word had very little effect upon her, till some time after her marriage. Being settled near Tetney, she attended preaching with her husband, at that place; and there the Lord was pleased to meet with her, and mercifully open her blind eyes to see, and awaken her conscience to feel the dreadful state into which she had been brought by sin. She now experienced great sorrow of heart;

but she sought the Lord earnestly, and soon found him to her joy and comfort. For one evening at a prayer-meeting, being more distressed than usual, while her husband and another friend were earnestly engaged in prayer, the Lord was pleased to bring her soul out of trouble, by powerfully applying to her mind, "Thou shalt walk with me in white:" Instantly all her fear and distress were removed, and she was filled with peace and joy in believing.

She walked in the light of the Lord's countenance for some time. But removing from Tetney to a considerable distance, where there was no preaching, she gradually fell into a backsliding state, and suffered great loss in her soul. About this time, one of their children was dreadfully burnt, which affliction pressing very powerfully upon her mind, as is probable, laid the foundation of a consumption, which afterwards took her off. Feeling herself grow weaker and weaker, she was excited to seek the Lord again, by earnest prayer, that he might heal her backslidings, and love her freely; but she found it very difficult to recover the grace she had lost. He, however, who says, "I will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoaking flax," did, at length, in mercy, hear her prayer, and once more brought her soul into a state of union and communion with himself. As they were removed to Beelsby Parish, a place where there is preaching once a fortnight, her husband and she united themselves to the Society there. Being, however, in general, very unwell, she was not able to meet constantly, although she sometimes attended when she could scarcely walk.

One day, during her sickness, she said to her husband, "I have seen farther this day into heaven, than I ever saw before. O what glory and happiness hath the Lord prepared for them that love him!" Her husband, for the spiritual benefit of his dear afflicted partner, who was now wholly confined to her bed, used to invite the preachers, and any serious friend that he could prevail on, to visit her, and occasionally a prayer-meeting was held

at their house. One was kept there the Sunday fortnight before she died, which was made a very great blessing to her, and she also, apparently, was made a blessing to many that attended; especially to the young, whom she exhorted to remember their Creator in the days of their youth, and not to defer their repentance till it was too late. The people of God she urged to press forward to the mark of perfect holiness, in order that they might receive the prize of their high calling. Addressing the Lord, she said, "Whom have I in heaven but *Thee*, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee. My heart and my flesh fail, thou art the Strength of my heart, and wilt be my Portion for ever." One Sunday morning, while our friends were meeting together in Class, she had a peculiar manifestation of the divine favour to her soul, which caused her to ask her husband, when he returned, Whether any person prayed for her in particular? And, upon his answering in the affirmative, she replied, "I thought so, by the blessing I have received since you went." She added, "For the sake of my dear Redeemer, may the Lord reward them an hundred fold here for all their kindness to me, and crown them in the world to come with everlasting glory." She then, with a cheerful countenance, sung,

"'Tis a heaven below,
My Jesus to know!
And the angels could no nothing more,
Than to fall at his feet,
And the story repeat,
And the lover of sinners adore."

I called upon her and administered to her the Lord's Supper a few days before she died, at which time I found her remarkably happy in the love of God. She spoke of finding it a very blessed season to her soul, and said to her husband a little after, "I am enabled now to give you and my dear children fully up into the hands of the Lord, and am confident he will provide for you, therefore, *trust in him*, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlast-

ing strength and boundless love." When brother Marrows, one of our local preachers, called upon her, and was engaged in conversation and prayer with her, the Lord was powerfully present to comfort and refresh her spirit, and the minds of all that were present. When he took his leave of her, he said, "Farewel, we shall soon meet in heaven, where pain and parting will be no more." She replied, "Farewel, and give my love to my dear Stallingbrough friends, and tell them to strive, and be in good earnest in making their calling and election sure, that we may all meet together at God's right hand." A little before she died, after informing her husband how and where she would wish to be buried; and when her dissolution seemed to be fast appoaching, she said, "I have almost done with this poor world, and I am going to my heavenly Father, and my dear Redeemer," adding, "My bed is surrounded with angels, and all around me is glory and heaven." Her mother then offered her a little wine, in a tea-spoon: but she could not take it, saying, "Though I cannot take any now, I shall soon drink it new in the kingdom of my heavenly Father." Her husband and friends, perceiving her changing fast for death, found the parting scene almost too much for them. Observing them to be all in tears, she said, "Don't weep; you grieve me to see you weep, rather praise the Lord for being about to take me to himself." Whilst the silver cord was loosening, great drops of sweat ran down her face. Her mother said, "You have as much pain as you can bear." "Yes," replied she, "I have need to exercise all the grace the Lord hath given. But I feel his strength, blessed be his Name, proportioned to my day: and only let faith and patience hold out a little longer, and all will be well forever." As she was in very great pain, her husband called upon the Lord, if it were his blessed will, to mitigate it, and immediately the pain abated. She then became very cheerful, and, smiling in the arms of death, said, "Praise! O praise the Lord, for removing my pain, and for making my soul happier than ever." "O what a comfort," said she to her mother, "will it be to you when I am dead, to

think I am gone to heaven, to unite with my father, my two sisters, my two children, and all the heavenly host to praise God and the Lamb for ever and ever." She lay smiling a little time, with her eyes turned towards heaven, and then broke out in a rapture, saying, "Yonder are angels looking out, and coming for me: I am now going to enter the joy of my Lord." And lifting up her dying arm in token of victory, and pointing up to heaven, she said, "Glory be to God! glory! glory! Happy, happy for ever!" As she fetched a few deep sighs, her relations thought her spirit had taken its flight; but recovering her breath a little, she said, "The Lord is come into my heart; the Lord is with me," and instantly fell asleep, Nov. 7, 1802, in the 29th year of her age. I shall only add, that at the time of her departure, the divine Power descended in a very powerful manner upon all that were present, which constrained them to bow in silent adoration before the Lord.

From a publication, entitled, "Letters written by the late EARL OF CHATHAM, *to his Nephew, Thomas Pitt, Esqr.*

"I COME now to the part of the Advice I have to offer you, which most nearly concerns your welfare, and upon which every good and honourable purpose of your life will assuredly turn; I mean, the keeping up in your heart the true sentiments of Religion. If you are not right towards God, you can never be so towards man. The noblest sentiment of the human breast is here brought to the test. Is gratitude in the number of a man's virtues? If it be, the highest benefactor demands the warmest returns of gratitude, love, and praise. *Ingratum qui dixerit, omnia dixit.* If a man wants this virtue, where there are infinite obligations to excite and quicken it, he will be likely to want all others towards his fellow creatures, whose utmost gifts are poor, compared with those he daily received at the hands of his never-failing, almighty Friend. *Remember thy Creator in*

the days of thy youth, is big with the deepest wisdom. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom, and an upright heart, that is understanding. This is eternally true, whether the wits and rakes of Cambridge allow it or not. Nay, I must add of this religious wisdom, *Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.* whatever your young gentlemen think of a harlot and a bottle. a tainted health, and battered constitution. Hold fast, therefore, by this sheet anchor of happiness, RELIGION; you will often want it in the times of most danger, the storms and tempests of life. Cherish true religion as preciously, as you will fly, with abhorrence and contempt, superstition and enthusiasm. The first is the perfection and glory of the human nature; the two last, the deprivation and disgrace of it. Remember, the esssence of religion, is a heart void of offence towards God and man;—not subtle, speculative opinions, but AN ACTIVE. VITAL PRINCIPLE OF FAITH."

OF THE NATURE AND NECESSITY. OF CONVERSION.

Extracted from Dr. Paley.

THERE is no doctrine of the Holy Scriptures on which a greater stress is laid, or which is more frequently inculcated than that of *Conversion.* It is every where represented in those sacred Oracles as of absolute necessity in order to salvation. (See Matt. xviii. 3. John iii. 3. Gal. vi. 15. 2 Cor. v. 17.) Nevertheless, those who preach this doctrine, how careful soever they may be to express themselves in the very language of scripture, and to annex to their expressions only scriptural ideas, are very generally represented as mere *Enthusiasts or Fanatics.* The late Dr. Paley was certainly neither an Enthusiast, nor a Fanatic. His learned words on the Evidences of Christianity and on Moral and Political Phylosophy, which are in such high repute, secure him against any such imputation. And yet Dr. Paley saw, and has borne testimony to the necessity of conversion.

The following short Extract from one of his Sermons on this subject, may, to some of our Readers, cast some light on those many passages of Scripture which inculcate this doctrine, at the same time that it serves to remove prejudice and recommend the doctrine itself to their most serious attention.

"I do not, in the smallest degree, mean to undervalue, or speak lightly of such changes, whenever or in whomsover they take place; nor to deny, that they may be *sudden*, yet *lasting*; (nay, I am rather inclined to think that is in this manner that they frequently do take place) nor to dispute what is, upon good testimony alledged, concerning *conversion* being brought about by affecting incidents of life; by striking passages of Scripture; by impressive discourses from the pulpit; by what we meet with in books; or even by single touching sentences or expressions in such discourses or books. I am not disposed to question those relations uncecessarily, but rather to bless God for such instances, when I hear of them, and to regard them as merciful ordinations of his Providence.

"Now of the persons in our congregations, to whom we not only *may*, but *must*, preach the doctrine of Conversion *plainly* and *directly*, are those, who, with the name, indeed of Christians, have heretofore passed their lives without any internal religion whatever. These are no more Christians, as to any actual benefit of christianity to their souls, than the most hardened Jew; or the most profligate Gentile was in the age of the gospel. As to any difference in the two cases, the difference is all against them. These must be converted before they can be saved. The course of their thoughts must be changed: the very principles upon which they act, must be changed:—considerations, which never, or hardly ever entered into their minds, must deeply and perpetually engage them. Views and motives, which did not influence them at all, must become the views and motives which they regularly consult, and by which they are guided; that is to say, there must be a revolution of principle; the

visible conduct must change, but there must be a revolution *within*. A change so entire, so deep, so important as this, I do allow to be a Conversion: and no one who is in the situation above described, can be saved without undergoing it; and he must necessarily both be sensible of it at the time, and remember it all his life afterwards. It is too momentous an event ever to be forgot. A man might as easily forget his escape from a shipwreck.

"Whether it was sudden, or whether it was gradual, if it was effected, (and the fruits will prove that) it was true conversion, and every such person may justly both believe and say it himself, that he was converted at a particular assignable time. It may not be necessary to speak of his conversion, but he will always think of it, with unbounded thankfulness to the Giver of all grace, the Author of all mercies.

"The next description of persons, to whom we must preach *conversion*, properly so called, are those, who *allow themselves* in the course and habit of some particular sin. The allowed prevalence of any one known sin, is sufficient to exclude us from the character of God's children. And we must be converted from sin, in order to become such. Here then we must preach conversion.

"In these two cases, therefore, men must be *converted* and *live*, or remain *unconverted* and *die*. And the time of conversion can be ascertained. There must that pass within them, at some particular assignable time, which is properly conversion, and will all their lives be remembered as such. This description without all doubt, comprehends great numbers; and it is each person's business to settle with himself, whether he be not of the number, if he be, he sees what is to be done."

MAXIM. "Let nothing be lost," said our Saviour; but that is lost that is misused.

From the Memoirs of the Life of Sir WILLIAM JONES.

SIR WILLIAM was a man of most extraordinary attainments. He appears to have been acquainted with no less than twenty-eight languages, and to have pursued, with uncommon ardour, almost every species of knowledge. In Indian learning he was without a competitor. He was the founder, the president, and the very soul of the society established in Calcutta, for the encouragement of Persian and Sanscript Literature; a society which has already removed much of that gross darkness that had so long enveloped Oriental subjects. This great man, after a dispassionate and careful examination into the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures, recorded his belief of them in the following note, which he wrote at the end of his own Bible. "I have regularly and attentively read these Holy Scriptures; and am of opinion, that this Volume, independently of its Divine Origin, contains more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, more pure morality, more important history, and finer strains of Poetry and Eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever age or language they may have been composed."

The last hour of the life of this illustrious character, was marked with a solemn act of devotion. Finding his dissolution rapidly approaching, he desired his attendants to carry him into an inner apartment, where, at his desire, they left him. Returning after a short interval, they found him in a kneeling posture, with his hands clasped, and his eyes fixed towards heaven. As they were removing him, he expired.

ANECDOTE.

WHEN Buckingham was once talking profanely before Charles II. Waller reproved him by saying, "My Lord, I am a great deal older than your grace, and, I believe have heard more arguments for atheism than ever your grace did; but I have lived long enough to see there is nothing in them, and so I hope your grace will."

Poetry.

ON HUMAN LIFE.

WHEN from his sable pillow, Sol, his head
Lifts up, emerging from his lazy bed,
Opens the windows of the eastern sky,
And smiling views, with omnipresent eye,
Fair nature waking from her still repose,
Bright in that beam which health and gladness sows,
Tuning beneath, above, her various voice,
While newly quicken'd, all her works rejoice:
Soon fades the brilliant scene, Sol ends his race,
And night comes stealing with his *hidden* face:
A silent, gloomy contrast now succeeds,
And widow'd nature wears her sable weeds.
Our life, at best, is but a summer's day;
We're hardly born before we're swept away.
Then he alone deserves the name of *wise*,
Who, ere his transient sun shall sink beneath the skies,
Takes heed that in Eternity, his sun again may rise.

AN ADDRESS TO THE DEITY.

O THOU whose power o'er moving worlds presides,
Whose voice created, and whose wisdom guides,
On darkling man in pure effulgence shine,
And cheer the clouded mind with light divine.
'Tis thine alone to calm the troubled breast,
With silent confidence, and holy rest;
From Thee, great God! we spring, to Thee we tend,
Path, Motive, Guide, Original, and end!

NEW-YORK: Printed and Published by JOHN C. TOTTEN, No. 155 Chatham-street, at TWO DOLLARS per year, payable quarterly.
Subscriptions are received by the publisher, and by the Rev. JOHN WILSON, No. 249 Pearl-street. Also, by Mr. FURMAN BLACK, No. 148 North Front-street, Philadelphia; and by Mr. JAMES HERBERT, Brooklyn.